



August 12, 2013

The Honorable Justin Amash
U.S. House of Representatives
House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Amash:

On Thursday, July 11th, the U.S. House of Representatives held a closed vote for a Farm Bill (H.R. 2642) that, for the first time in almost 40 years, excluded SNAP from the Agriculture Bill. The bill was passed in a strict party-line vote.

Considering last month's floor debate on the topic of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), we are concerned that a stand-alone nutrition title bill will not fare well in this Congress. The Senate passed a Farm Bill (S. 3240) in June, though it isn't clear that the House will assign delegates to a Conference Committee or what the outcome for the Nutrition Title would be if they did.

The nation is yet to recover from the seemingly never-ending effects of the Great Recession, which continues to take a toll on food security. Michigan has taken an extraordinary hit after its greatest asset, the automotive industry, nearly collapsed. At 8.4%, the state's unemployment rate remains well above the national average, and the food insecurity rate for the state remains elevated at 17.9%. Even more disturbing, over half a million children in Michigan are food insecure, a staggering 23.7% of all Michigan children.

Passing a Farm Bill without the nutrition title not only leaves the SNAP program vulnerable to future House actions, it also means that the program has not been strengthened to better reduce hunger and malnutrition. The Farm Bill could have, and should have, been an opportunity for us to learn more about why the program isn't reaching all those who are hungry. Instead, the House passed a Farm Bill without a single hearing on hunger, shamefully bypassing our ability to address the daunting reality that one in five children are going hungry right here in America.

We urge leadership in Congress to reject costly new program rules and requirements for states and SNAP recipients. Such provisions would be an unnecessary burden on a program which has proven time and time again to be one of the most accurately administered and closely monitored government programs.

The Honorable Justin Amash
Page 2
August 12, 2013

Instead, we urge our Representatives to pass a comprehensive Farm Bill that strengthens SNAP and improves access to affordable, healthy food for all Americans.

Sincerely,

Access of West Michigan
Advocacy, Re-Entry, Resources and Outreach (A.R.R.O) of the NorthWest Initiative
Burton Senior Center
Capuchin Soup Kitchen
Center for Civil Justice
Community Economic Development Association of Michigan
Creating Heroes Stephen's Way
Crim Fitness Foundation
Elder Law of Michigan
Fair Chance Coalition to Ban the Box
Feeding America West Michigan
Flint Public Library
Food Bank Council of Michigan
Food Bank of Eastern Michigan
Food Bank of South Central Michigan
Food Gatherers
Forgotten Harvest
Genesee County Community Action Resource Department
Gleaners Community Food Bank
Kalamazoo Loaves and Fishes
Michigan Community Action Agency Association
Michigan Economic Impact Coalition
Michigan Farmers Market Association
Michigan League for Public Policy
Michigan Rural Council
Michigan's Children
My Brother's Keeper of Genesee County
Neighborhood Service Organization
Resource Genesee
United Way for Southeastern Michigan
Yad Ezra, Michigan's only kosher food pantry